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ABSTRACT

As a means of organizing the diverse literature on and approaches to planned educational change, the author proposes a typology that focuses on change perspectives. Whereas previously proposed typologies classified approaches to change according to the change strategies or processes utilized, the current proposal urges using "change perspectives," which can be loosely defined as frames of reference within and around which people organize their thinking and work. The nine perspectives proposed are those oriented toward (1) critical and radical reform, (2) legislated and mandated change, (3) knowledge production and utilization, (4) institutional planning and forecasting, (5) conflict and institutional politics, (6) organization development and renewal, (7) training and staff development, (8) individual and self-directed change, and (9) behavioral shaping and influencing. These perspectives are loosely arranged into three overlapping tiers according to the level of intended emphasis: perspectives 1-3 are primarily directed to larger social systems, perspectives 3-7 to the institutional or organizational level, and perspectives 6-9 to the level of the individual person. After discussing the assumptions relating to each perspective and noting some issues that may arise from the use of mixed perspectives, the author calls for further research to test the typology. (Author/PGD)

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PLANNED EDUCATIONAL CHANGE: A TYPOLOGY OF OVERLAPPING PERSPECTIVES

by

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NINE PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGING SCHOOLS: A PROPOSED NEW TYPOLOGY

(As a means of organizing the diverse literature on and approaches to planned educational change, the author proposes a new typology which focuses on change perspectives. Change perspectives, similar to Kuhn's idea of paradigms, are viewed as loosely defined "frames-of-reference" within and around which people organize their thinking and their work. Nine perspectives are included in the typology. A major feature of the typology is the concept of differentiated but overlapping levels of intended emphasis, focusing on larger social systems, organizations, and the level of the individual. Assumptions relating to each perspective are also discussed, as are potential issues arising from the use of mixed perspectives and mixed strategies.)

The literature on planned educational change has grown to such an extent that it is increasingly difficult for school administrators and other individuals actively engaged in change efforts to remain conversant with everything going on in the field. One has only to cite the recent work of Mann,[1] Fullan, Miles and Taylor,[2] Duke,[3] Berman and McLaughlin,[4] House,[5] Williams, Wall, Martin and Berchin,[6] Goodlad,[7] Bowles and Gintis,[8] March,[9] Milstein,[10] Pajak,[11] Herriott and Gross,[12] Louis,[13] Schmuck, Runkel, Arends and Arends,[14] Van Meter,[15] Zaltman, Florio and Sikorski,[16] and Bentzen,[17] to illustrate a few of the many differing ways in which issues germane to planned change in education are being examined and discussed.

As one means of attempting to bring a semblance of order to this diverse literature a number of authors have within the past several years developed typologies which permit some categorization of different approaches to change. One of the more widely recognized change typologies now in use was proposed some time ago by Chin and Benne. It classified approaches to change under three

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major headings: rational-empirical strategies, normative-re-educative strategies, and power-coercive strategies.[18] Other useful typologies have been developed by Olmosk,[19] Havelock and Havelock,[20] Schmuck and Miles,[21] Tichy,[22] Blake and Mouton,[23] and Sashkin, Morris and Horst.[24] The more recent work of Hood and Cates is particularly useful.[25] They delineate seven basic models of change: research, development and diffusion; social interaction diffusion; problem-solving; therapeutic-intervention theory; planned change; action research; and linkage process. A good overview of the literature on change typologies is provided by Spencer and Cullen.[26]

Recognizing the several change typologies already available, in this article yet another system of classification is presented. In contrast to most of those noted above, however, this typology is organized on the dual basis of one's perspective on change and also on the intended point of impact or emphasis. By focussing on change perspectives rather than change strategies a distinction is made which may improve our understanding of issues relating to change efforts in educational settings. Perspectives as used here is somewhat akin to Kuhn's idea of paradigms; they are loosely defined "frames-of-reference" within and around which people organize their thinking and work.[27] Individuals working toward and writing about change efforts typically view the entire change effort from a particular perspective, or some combination of perspectives, with which they are most familar. Strategies, on the other hand, are much closer to the idea of methodology; they are procedures for getting something done. Thus strategies are employed within perspectives. Individuals attempting change, and operating from a particular perspective, might use any number of strategies in the effort.

The typology presented here incorporates nine planned change perspectives. The nine perspectives include:

* The Critical & Radical Reform Perspective (CRR). A guiding theme of this perspective is a criticism of educational systems as they are organized and operated, particularly in the United States. This is, to a large extent, a critic's perspective. Schools are often viewed from this perspective as being essentially homogeneous. Proponents of the reform perspective often take on all of education, calling in many instances for a major or even total restructuring and revision in how learning, teaching, and education take place. Assumptions held by individuals operating from this perspective include: (1) most schools are enough alike to permit generalized criticism; (2) people will listen to and act upon a rationally presented argument for change; and (3) people in positions to make educational changes will somehow obtain or receive the message of the reformer./28

* The Legislated & Mandated Change Perspective (LMC). A guiding theme of this perspective is an orientation toward the lobbying for and passing of laws to bring about educational change. The focus here is on the formulation and passage of federal and state laws which require compliance on the part of schools. Proponents of this perspective often see themselves as working at the level of policy development and at times do not give detailed attention to questions of implementation leaving that dimension of change to others. Assumptions held by individuals operating from this perspective include: (1) people will obey the law; (2) people can and will understand the intent of legislated action; and (3) people generally agree with and accept the idea that legislated action expresses the "will of the people."/29

* The Knowledge Production & Utilization Perspective (KPU). A guiding theme of this perspective is a commitment to the production of educational products which can be used in school instruction and curriculum, as well as a commitment to work with schools in the implementation of what has been produced or developed. Proponents of this perspective in many instances see themselves as "creators" of educational knowledge, processes and content which are intended to improve education. While products are typically intended to be useable in a wide range of school and school district situations, there is often a commitment among proponents of this perspective to modify the product or process in a manner to fit the unique circumstances of individual adopting schools. Assumptions held by individuals operating from this perspective include: (1) educators are seeking new ideas, information, products and processes; (2) people will adopt and support changes from current practice and use, if they can be shown to be of use; and (3) people can be taught or otherwise learn to use new ideas, information, products and processes./30

* The Institutional Planning & Forecasting Perspective (IPF). A guiding theme of this perspective is an orientation toward rational and systematic planning for the future. Proponents of this perspective in many instances see themselves as having technical skills and expertise which can be used to develop plans for the long, short and intermediate future, with such plans usually based at least in part on data. The focus here is on obtaining, analyzing, interpreting and projecting information that can be used to make decisions about changes which should be made to more adequately contend with an anticipated future. Assumptions held by individuals operating from this perspective include: (1) the future can within reasonable limits be planned for in advance; (2) information needed to plan or to make future predictions can be obtained; and (3) people will support and work toward a planned future./31

* The Conflict & Institutional Politics Perspective (CIP). A guiding theme of this perspective is an orientation toward bringing about change within educational settings through the influencing of internal political factions and coalitions, and the "managing" of political conflicts. Proponents of this perspective often see themselves as being coordinators and shapers of educational change through the processes of institutional politics. The focus here is on garnering support for an intended or preferred course of action, and applying the use of power to bring about desired change. Assumptions held by individuals operating from this perspective include: (1) people will be responsive to authority and power when they determine they need to; (2) actual outcomes of politically induced change will be close or similar to intended outcomes; and (3) people will respond to political decisions relating to change if they view the political system in question as an acceptable forum for making institutional decisions./32

* The Organization Development & Renewal Perspective (ODR). A guiding theme of this perspective is a commitment to interacting with intact workgroups to improve both organizational task accomplishment and quality of work life. Proponents of this perspective in many instances see themselves as either internal or external consultants to educational organizations, employed to assist the organization make constructive changes through the use of selected organization development strategies. The focus here is on dealing with the process of change as it takes place within the "real-world" work setting, with particular attention given to the dynamics of workgroup member interactions which may be supportive as well as hindering to the change effort. Assumptions held by individuals operating from this perspective include: (1) dealing with organization-related issues and problems is a positive thing to do; (2) accurate information about the organization and about organization-related issues can be obtained; and (3) organizations can be improved./33

* The Training & Staff Development Perspective (TSD). A guiding theme of this perspective is an orientation toward providing members of educational organizations with structured opportunities to learn new and useful job-related information and skills. The focus here is on bringing about change through an updating of expertise on the part of school staff members so they will be able to use this newly acquired expertise within the context of their job responsibilities. Proponents of this perspective in many instances see themselves as promoters of educational change through a process of staff development. Assumptions held by individuals operating from this perspective include: (1) people can be taught or otherwise learn to do a better job; (2) any resources needed to put new skills, ideas or knowledge into practice will be provided; and (3) people will put new knowledge and skills to use once gained./34

* The Individual & Self-Directed Change Perspective (ISC). A guiding theme of this perspective is an orientation toward bringing about change in schools through the individual, self-initiated efforts of members of the school staff. Proponents of this perspective in many instances view imposed change by others as either inappropriate or unproductive, relying instead on a belief that substantive change can best be accomplished by individuals making their own decisions about needed changes within the unique context of their own job situation. The focus here is on providing resources, support and information

to individuals wanting to make changes, as they ask for and need such assistance. Assumptions held by individuals operating from this perspective include: (1) people will take the initiative to seek change; (2) people can identify and articulate what they want to change; and (3) people will have "ownership" in self-determined changes./35

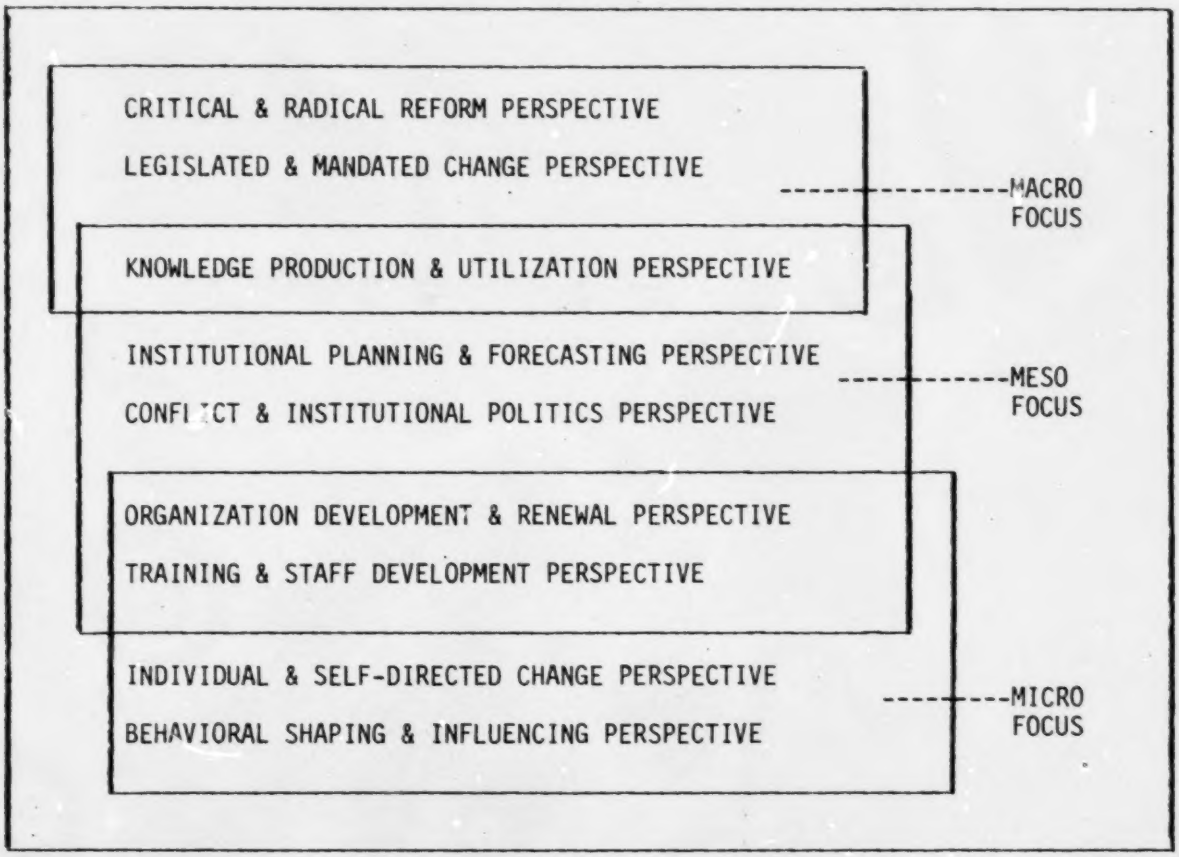
* The Behavioral Shaping & Influencing Perspective (BSI). A guiding theme of this perspective is an orientation toward changing the behavior of individuals within school settings through the use of techniques associated with behavioral psychology. Although most often thought of as being used with students, behavioral shaping techniques can be and are used to bring about changes in the behavior of teachers, administrators and other adult individuals within schools. Proponents of this perspective often see themselves as technical experts in the application of behavioral modification and shaping techniques. The focus here is on rewarding, punishing and otherwise systematically influencing behavior in an attempt to move the behavior toward some desired end. Assumptions held by individuals operating from this perspective include: (1) behavioral shaping techniques have enough permanence to be used in school-related change situations; (2) effective rewards in school settings can be identified and can be made available; and (3) applications of behavioral shaping can be made with adults in work settings./36

A graphic overview of these nine perspectives is provided in Figure 1. The perspectives are organized according to the second element of analysis in the typology. There is a loosely structured order of different levels of intended emphasis or impact from those perspectives primarily directed to larger social systems, those primarily directed to the institutional or organizational level, and finally those primarily directed to the level of the individual person. This three-tier manner of identifying the intended major focus borrows directly from Hage's idea of differentiating between the macro, meso and micro levels of explanation with reference to the study of organizational behavior, although it is used in a slightly different way as applied to this typology.[37] The overlapping cases simply acknowledge the multiple emphases of several perspectives, which is an important feature of the typology as presented. One could certainly develop an argument for other overlapping cases among the nine perspectives, e.g. the inclusion of the Legislated & Mandated Change Perspective within the meso as well as macro level is one such example. To the extent it might assist our better understanding of change efforts, such a moving around of over-

lapping possibilities seems worth considering and should be explored. The major point at this juncture, however, is simply to become more aware of the differing perspectives and possible implications which might be drawn from recognizing and considering the three levels of emphasis.

Figure 1

The Overlapping Perspectives Model:
A Typology of Educational Change Perspectives


CRITICAL & RADICAL REFORM PERSPECTIVE
LEGISLATED & MANDATED CHANGE PERSPECTIVE
MACRO FOCUS
KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION & UTILIZATION PERSPECTIVE
INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING & FORECASTING PERSPECTIVE
CONFLICT & INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS PERSPECTIVE
MESO FOCUS
ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT & RENEWAL PERSPECTIVE
TRAINING & STAFF DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE
INDIVIDUAL & SELF-DIRECTED CHANGE PERSPECTIVE
BEHAVIORAL SHAPING & INFLUENCING PERSPECTIVE
MICRO FOCUS

The nine perspectives as presented provide, in effect, a relatively clear way to view the diverse literature on and approaches to planned educational change, from a perspectives rather than strategies frame of reference. The typology also permits the inclusion of some approaches to change which have not

received major attention within the context of other existing classification systems, i.e., the Critical & Radical Reform Perspective, the Institutional Planning & Forecasting Perspective, and the Individual & Self-Directed Change Perspective. Some clarification of the point of view being taken by proponents of change is also possible using the typology. It suggests where an individual proposing change may be coming from conceptually, and provides some indication of the level or focus of impact most characteristic of the perspective within which the individual is working. In those cases where an individual appears to be operating from a mixed perspectives orientation, it alerts one to that possibility and to potential issues which may be associated with such a combined approach, e.g. potential problems of mixing assumptions, strategies, or targets of intended emphasis. All of these are discussed briefly below. By clarifying such issues we may improve our understanding of why some change efforts are successful and some less so.

Assumptions, Strategies, Perspectives, And Intended Focus: Potential Sources Of Confusion About Change

It may reduce existing confusion about current approaches to educational change to set forth in more detail the assumptions underlying the particular approaches, or combinations of approaches, being used by people as they try to bring about change. To this end, a partial list of assumptions was suggested for each of the nine perspectives included in the typology presented in this paper. These are preliminary lists which can and certainly should be expanded and further delineated as more work is done.

We might reasonably ask for more specificity concerning the assumptions people are working from as they attempt to bring about change in educational settings. Equally important, however, and a point which can create an even more complex kind of confusion are the problems which might arise from individuals em-

ploying mixed perspectives as a basis for a change effort, and thus becoming involved in a process of working from a mixed set of assumptions! It is certainly possible, for example, that someone operating primarily from lets say a Legislated & Mandated Change Perspective might attempt to initiate a particular change, and subsequently find a lack of clear implementation procedures spelled out within that perspective. They might turn then to a Conflict & Institutional Politics Perspective to find and develop implementation strategies. The question then becomes, are the assumptions of the two perspectives compatible, and if not, does it matter? These are the kinds of questions people working in the area of planned educational change have not completely articulated or addressed.

If mixing assumptions creates potential confusion in bringing about change, so too is there potential confusion created in mixing perspectives, strategies, and targets of intervention. Several of these sources for potential confusion are identified briefly below:

1. Confusion is sometimes created because people believe perspectives and strategies are the same thing - Perspectives, as noted previously, might be thought of as something akin to Kuhn's idea of paradigms; they are loosely defined "frames-of-reference" within and around which people organize their thinking and work. Strategies, on the other hand, are much closer to the idea of methodology. They are procedures for getting something done. Thus action research, as a change strategy, might be used by someone working from the Institutional Planning & Forecasting Perspective and also someone working from the Organization Development & Renewal Perspective. Change strategies are used by people working within change perspectives.

2. Confusion is sometimes created because several change strategies may be used by an individual working within one perspective - As an example, both a problem solving strategy and an action research strategy might be used by someone working from an Institutional Planning & Forecasting Perspective.

3. Confusion is sometimes created because individuals working within different perspectives may use the same strategy, but in different ways - The use of survey-feedback procedures may be used by someone working from an Organization Development & Renewal Perspective, for example, in a different way than used by someone working from a Training & Staff Development Perspective.

4. Confusion is sometimes created because individuals adopt an eclectic approach and thus work from and mix several perspectives, but without letting anyone know - It is not uncommon, for example, for someone who has worked primarily from the Training & Staff Development Perspective to become conversant with and then work partially from the Organization Development & Renewal Perspective. Confusion can arise, however, when people with whom the individual is working are not aware of the shift of personal orientation.

5. Confusion is sometimes created because individuals work from a perspective at a level where it is typically not applied - Someone who is particularly interested in the current "cultural reproduction" discussion as it relates to curriculum inquiry, for example, and thus might be working primarily from a Critical & Radical Reform Perspective, may find themselves in a situation where they have an opportunity to work with teachers of a school on an issue of curricular reform, and then find that not much is known about making application at the micro level because most of the discussion about cultural reproduction has been directed to a macro level of emphasis./38

Using the typology as a touchstone for discussion, a further series of questions arises. An an example, it would be helpful to our understanding of planned change efforts in educational settings to be able to specify those change strategies used by individuals working within each of the nine proposed perspectives, or at least those strategies which individuals believe they use! We also need to learn if people who seem to be working from a particular perspective see themselves, in fact, as proponents of the perspective. We should examine potential differences between individuals working from a single perspective as contrasted with those employing mixed perspective approaches. And we might ask if there is such a thing as taking an eclectic approach which is too diverse or complicated? That is, while there may be combinations of perspectives which seem to have a natural fit, there also may be instances in which operating from a conceptual base involving three or four perspectives is counterproductive!

Summary

In contrast to most typologies relating to planned educational change, the one proposed here focuses on change perspectives, nine of which are delineated. The second feature of the typology is the presentation of these perspectives with-

in differentiated but overlapping levels of intended impact or emphasis. With this dual analysis by perspectives and level this typology provides a relatively clear view of the diverse approaches being taken by proponents of educational change. The typology also offers a conceptual framework within which questions can be raised about mixing assumptions, perspectives, strategies or intended level of intervention. Our understanding of change efforts in educational settings should be increased as we ask, and seek to answer, these kinds of questions. Certainly by formulating such questions our degree of conceptual clarity will be tested, and we can at least explain more clearly what we think we are doing when proposing specific educational changes.

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